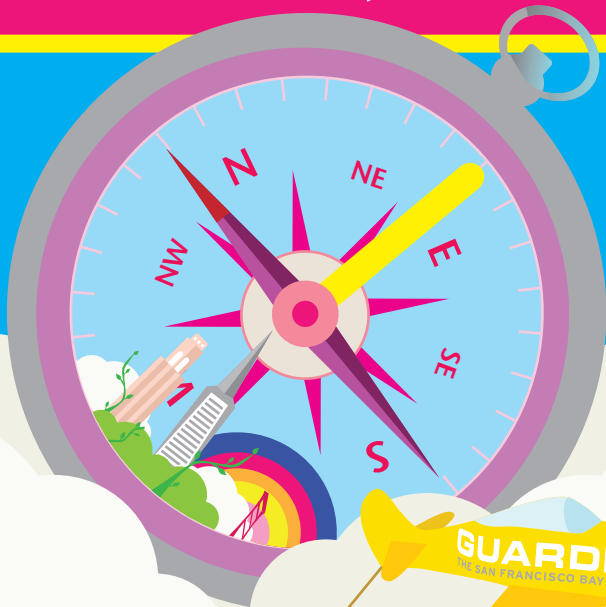


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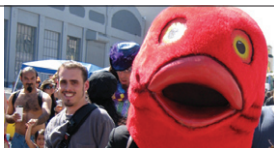
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EXPLORE THE CITY

I don't know about you, but whenever my cool friends or wonderful but eager family visit San Francisco and ask me what there is to see and do, I get total tourist block. No matter how well I think I know the Bay, my brain shuts down and my tongue gets stuttery. And I usually don't have time to search through their fancy 300-page visitor's guides and highlight all the neat things bright pink. So we here at the *Guardian* decided to create Explore SF, for visitors and natives alike. Just tell your guests to slip this in their pockets and set them free to discover some real local flavor. Or grab it on the weekends when you're bored and hit the streets yourself. Inside, we've chosen places we like, as well as some neighborhood hotspots for you to while away a pleasant afternoon or evening. For many more suggestions than we could fit here, visit us at sfbg.com for our Best of the Bay awards, event listings, dining options, and more.

Marke B.

Explore SF Editor

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GET FESTIVE



San Francisco loves a party, which is why we try to pack as many into 49 square miles and 365 days as we possibly can. Favorites are **How Weird Street Faire** (early May, www.howweird.org), a fête for freaks of all types; **Bay to Breakers** (third Sunday in May, www.ingbaytobreakers.com), which is half race and half costumed spectacle; **Pride** (late June, www.sfpride.org), the city-wide rainbow-colored celebration of all things LGBT; **Folsom Street Fair** (late September, www.folsomstreetfair.com), the neighborhood celebration of all things leather; and **LoveFest** (October, www.sfllovefest.org), the American cousin of Berlin's famous electronica event. Also check out less institutionalized but equally beloved (and even more irreverent) events like the **Valentine's Day Pillow Fight** (www.pillowfight.info), the **Sisters of Perpetual Indulgence's Easter Sunday in Dolores Park** (thesisters.org) and **Santacon** (www.santacon.com).

THINGS WE LIKE

Yoshi's Fillmore

The Fillmore district was an epicenter of the golden age of West Coast jazz, and this huge, luxurious, recent addition to the area is reviving the spirit of that bygone era for thousands of delighted musicophiles and newbies. Dine on delicious sushi, grab a couple of cool cocktails, and sink into the tuneful, improvisatory vibes with live shows nightly. Don't be surprised if you find yourself taking in performances by (or sitting next to) some of the Bay's jazz greats. *1330 Fillmore. (415) 655-5600, www.yoshis.com*
Neighborhood: Fillmore. Muni: 22 Fillmore, 38 Geary

Glen Canyon Park

A stunning shot of Northern California nature lies smack-dab in the middle of the city. This huge preserve in the Glen Park neighborhood offers outdoor activities, unusual wildlife, sports utilities, and the opportunity to get away from it all without the car-rental fees. Pack a couple of buttery chocolate croissants from nearby Destination Baking Company in the Glen Park Village shopping area and commune with nature (and gooey pastry) for an afternoon. *Bosworth and Elk*

Neighborhood: Glen Park. Muni: 44 O'Shaughnessy. BART: Glen Park

Ton Kiang

Chinatown gets all the press when it comes to Chinese cuisine in this town — deservedly so — but locals also flock to this Outer Richmond neighborhood fave from 10:30 a.m. to 9 p.m. daily to dive into some of the city's best dim sum. That means the large two-story dining room gets a little packed and noisy, but who cares when you're gorging on delectable *hai kim* (shrimp-stuffed

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TOUR IT UP



Guided tours don't have to be all visors, fanny packs, double-decker buses, and bored docents. SF's got plenty of specialized walkabouts as wacky as we are. A classic is "vampress" Mina Harker's lighthearted **Vampire Tour** (866-424-8836, www.sfvampiretour.com), exploring the role of the undead in the histories of Nob Hill landmarks. For a macabre walk on the other side of town, view houses and businesses and hear the ghost stories associated with them on the **Haunted Haight tour** (415-863-1416, www.hauntedhaight.com). Less regular but just as interesting are foodie Grace Walden's **Walking Tours** (www.graceannwalden.net) of important culinary destinations, and Slinky Productions' sexy **Tour of North Beach Gentlemen's Clubs** (www.slinkyproductions.com) for singles or couples. Check the Web sites for dates or to schedule a private tour.

crab claws) and *siu lung bao* (Shanghai meat dumplings)?
 5821 Geary. (415) 752-4440, www.tonkiang.net
Neighborhood: Outer Richmond. Muni: 38 Geary

Temple

If you're into giant, after-hours nightlife experiences with a spiritual edge, this recently opened megaclub will grab you body and soul (without completely draining your wallet). Techno, tribal, electronica, hip-hop — even guided meditation and peace conferences — all find a home in the bangin' multiple rooms of this green-certified palace. Check the basement "catacombs" for the latest sounds, grab a bite at attached Thai restaurant Prana, and don't forget your latest dancing shoes.

540 Howard. www.templessf.com
Neighborhood: SoMa. Muni: 27 Bryant

Fiona's Sweet Shoppe

Ah yes, the famous Union Square, where the tumult of international commercialism, in the form of a gazillion department stores and tourist traps, can certainly overwhelm. When you've had enough browsing, or just need a sweet refresher, head a few blocks north-east to this incredibly cute, tiny candy store on Sutter Street. Scrumptious old school confections like English toffee and Dutch licorice abound, each piece individually wrapped and displayed in adorable jars.

214 Sutter. (415) 399-9992, www.fionassweetshoppe.com
Neighborhood: Downtown. Muni: 30 Stockton, 45 Union

Upper Playground

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HEY, KIDS

Though SF's known for being an adult playground, there's plenty here to entertain those too young to enjoy Trannyshack. There's something for everyone — and for free — at toddler-friendly **Randall Museum** (199 Museum Way, 415-554-9600, www.randallmuseum.org), which houses an animal room, a labyrinth, and tons of exhibits on a hill near Twin Peaks. When you're done inside, you and the young'uns can hike through the neighboring

CONTINUES ON PAGE 14

mately an entire block of Fillmore Street in Lower Haight, is the streetwise hipster's one-stop dream. Local graffiti artists line up to design for Upper Playground's numerous lines of T-shirts, hats, jackets, and accessories (including cheeky dildos and shot glasses), or to display their latest graphic works. When you're done fingering monogrammed fleece in downtown's tourist traps, this is the place to collect real SF souvenirs.

220 Fillmore. (415) 861-1960, www.upperplayground.com
Neighborhood: Lower Haight. Muni: 30

The Buena Vista

Whether or not the talented gents of the Buena Vista bar and café brought the everdreamy Irish coffee to America (as has been claimed), this well-appointed bar is well worth visiting for its cozy, old-timey atmosphere in the heart of North Beach — and for that

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HEY, KIDS CONTINUED

canyon. Let older kids loose at the **Metreon** (101 Fourth St.; 415-369-6000, www.mtreon.com) whose cinema, Playstation store, arcade, and neighboring Yerba Buena Gardens will occupy them for hours while you tour SoMa's shops and restaurants in teen-free peace. Or take the whole family to quirky Golden Gate Park attraction the **Buffalo Paddock** (John F. Kennedy Dr., 415-831-2700), where (you guessed it) a herd of buffalo actually graze, play, and — yes — roam.

lovely, steaming concoction of Irish whisky and specially prepared cream. Fog? What fog? You'll slice right through it with a couple of warm ones in your belly.

2765 Hyde. (415) 474-5044. www.thebuenavista.com
Neighborhood: North Beach. Cable Car: Powell and Hyde

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1026 Valencia, SF. (415) 641-1024, www.ritualroasters.com



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SWITCHING GEARS



This is a bike town, baby, and your best bet for taking in the sights, sounds, and occasionally iffy smells of this fair burg is to two-wheel it. Bike rental shops can be found anywhere in the city — especially good are **Blazing Saddles** (multiple locations, 415-202-8888, www.blazingsaddles.com) and **Golden Gate Park Bike and Skate** (3038 Fulton St., 415-668-1117). The thrilling **Critical Mass** (www.critical-mass.org), a massive, somewhat chaotic ride and party that takes over the streets every last Friday evening of the month, brings bikers of all stripes together. As for San Francisco bike culture, be sure to grab a pint and sausage at **Gestalt Haus** (3159 16th St., 415-560-0137) — the city's first dedicated to bicyclists — or a coffee and sandwich at the gearhead-oriented **Mojo** (639 Divisadero, 415-440-2338, www.mojobicycle-cafe.com). For more bike events and info, check out the San Francisco Bicycle Coalition's Web site (www.sfbike.org).

Neighborhood: Mission. Muni: 14 Mission, 26 Valencia. BART: 24th Street

Zeitgeist

Rain or shine, this world-famous dive always seems packed with hipsters, hippies, bikers, anarchists, burners, European exchange students, and anyone else willing to brave notoriously surly service from punk-rock bartenders. The payoff? A chance to sip stellar Bloody Marys or draught imports on a beer garden-style bench in the expansive backyard. Sunday afternoons are especially raucous, and feature a shamelessly carnivorous barbeque. 199 Valencia, SF. (415) 255-7505, myspace.com/zeitgeistsf
Neighborhood: SoMa. Muni: 22 Fillmore, 26 Valencia

AsiaSF

Sleek, upscale, stylish — and fabulously gender-bending. Chichi drinks and high-end food are part of the deal, but AsiaSF's real draw is its spectacular, theatrical, during-dinner shows featuring gorgeous, jaw-dropping gender illusionists — high-kicking, hair-flipping, and lip-synching with flair atop the long, thin bar. A restaurant and club perfect for celebrations, special occasions, and other-side-of-the-mirror titillation.

201 Ninth St., SF. (415) 255-2742, www.asiasf.com
Neighborhood: SoMa. Muni: F Line, 14 Mission, 19 Polk. BART: Civic Center Station

Bottom of the Hill

Situated deep in the deceptively charming industrial district of Potrero Hill, this live music venue, bar, and restaurant is known to music fans worldwide as one of the best places in San Francisco to see live bands. With a roster of performers that reads like



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DRAG TIME

Where would San Francisco be without its drag queens? Probably floating somewhere in the bland ocean of gender-specific tedium. To take in some jaw-dropping old-school drag, hit up the athletic weekend performances of the grande dames of Hot Boxxx at Tenderloin watering hole **Aunt Charlie's Lounge** (133 Turk, 415-441-2922, www.auntcharlieslounge.com) or the cheeky lip-synchstravaganzas at **Marlena's** (488 Hayes, 415-864-6672, www.marlenas.com).

CONTINUES ON PAGE 20

Pitchfork's Who's Who of Indie Rock (and local acts soon to be included), an intimate stage, cheap cover, and a comfortable smoking patio, it's a good bet seven days a week.

1233 17th St., SF. (415) 621-4455, www.bottomofthehill.com
Neighborhood: Potrero Hill. Muni: 19 Polk, 22 Fillmore

Beat Museum

If there's one thing North Beach is known for more than its Italian roots, it's for being the adopted home of the Beat Generation. This shop and museum is dedicated to all things Kerouac-and-friends, from documentaries upstairs to Beat bobbleheads (downstairs). An interesting education for curious on-the-roaders and a treasure trove for serious, finger-snapping fanatics looking to get groovy.

540 Broadway, SF. (800) 537-6822, www.thebeatmuseum.org



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DRAG TIME CONTINUED

marlenasbarsf.com). For trashy new-school drag madness (get ready for fake blood), you can't beat Anna Conda's free Friday night weekly **Charlie Horse at the Cinch** (1723 Polk, 415-776-4162, www.thecinch.com), the wild weekend night antics at the **Metro Bar** (2124 Market, 415-703-9750) near the Castro — especially the biweekly Monster Show, hosted by daffy Cookie Dough (www.cookievision.com) — or any of the mind-blowing events by drag mafia don-diva Heklina (www.heklina.com).

Neighborhood: North Beach. Muni: 20 Columbus, 41 Union, 45 Union/Stockton

Casanova Lounge

Hip, crowded, and unapologetically ironic (read: velvet nudes on the walls), Casanova, a full-service dive bar, is a Mission flagship. Crimson lighting and comfortable couches give it a slight boudoir/opium den feel, while lots of standing room and loud DJ music keep a casual vibe. And yes, it's a meat market, but also a great place to meet well-versed, impeccably accessorized locals.

527 Valencia, SF. (415) 863-9328, www.casanovasf.com
Neighborhood: Mission. Muni: 22 Fillmore, 26 Valencia, BART: 16th Street

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HOT SPOTS

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p42: Divisadero and Page

p48: 6th Avenue and Clement

Pacific Ocean

OCEAN
BEACH

LINCOLN PARK

Seacliff

Outer Richmond

Golden Gate Park

Outer Sunset

SF ZOO

Sloat Blvd

STERN GROVE

BAKER
BEACH

Doyle Dr

Lincoln Blvd

Clement St

Geary Blvd

36th Ave

25th Ave

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28th Ave

Taraval St

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West
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St. Francis
Wood

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19th Ave

Lawton St

7th Ave

LAGUNA
HONDA

Charmion Ave

Twin
Peaks

Cole
Valley

Upper
Haight

Inner Richmond

7th Ave

Stanyan St

Masonic Ave

California St

Arguello Blvd

Jackson St

The Presidio

CRISSY FIELD

Mason St

US
101

p48



HOTSPOT:

22ND & VALENCIA

A melting pot of ethnic eateries, dive bars, cute shops, cheap thrift stores, progressive booksellers, and unique cafés, the Mission has long been the Marina's polar opposite: dirty, artsy, and on the funkier side of trendy. Lately, though, the neighborhood famous for its fixie-riding hipsters, barhopping bridge-and-tunnelers, and homeless people has seen an influx of upscale dining destinations and *überchic* boutiques, which only increases its reputation as one of the most quintessentially "San Francisco" areas in the city.

Muni: 26 Valencia, 67 Bernal Heights, 14 Mission, 49 Mission-Van Ness, 48 Quintara-24th Street.
BART: 24th Street

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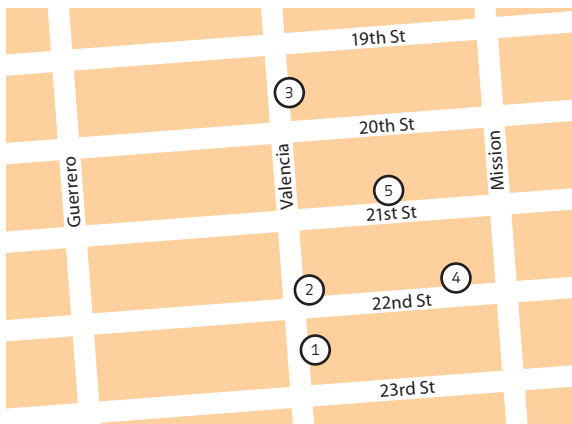
SIDETRIPS

CASTRO

Muni: F line, 24 Divisadero

Yay for gays, and yay for this center of LGBT culture which — despite its more touristy aspects (if you want an anatomically correct Ken doll or sequined rainbow thong, this is the place) — still retains a strong sense of community and history. Plus cute boys. And hot dykes. The relaxed, picturesque neighborhood, located just north of the Mission, has one or two stops along the cruising way to refresh yourself and score a few non-rainbow-bedecked goodies. **Cliff's Variety** (479 Castro, 415-431-5365, www.cliffsvariety.com) is a full-service hardware store in the heart of the Castro, which means it's brimming with burly he-men and hardy women — and all kinds of neat decor items — so perfect. **Café Flor** (2298 Market, 415-621-8579, www.cafeflor.com) possesses a cherished outdoor patio full of laptop grazers and sunshine seekers, plus a full bar. And, heading east down Market Street, **The Transfer Bar** (198 Church, 415-861-7499) is a hipster's paradise of strong drinks, colorful young patrons, and edgy dance music at night.

22ND & VALENCIA



1. Radio Habana Social Club

Once you find this hidden treasure — look for the collaged door next to Garçon — the first thing you'll notice is the itty-bitty restaurant's decor: a wall-to-wall pastiche of odd trinkets, weird dioramas, re-imagined dolls, and off-kilter picture frames. Next you'll notice the tiny menu of delicious, reasonably priced food; the friendly service; and the convivial clientele speaking Spanish at the (also tiny) bar. 1109 Valencia. (415) 824-7659

2. Boogaloos

You'll have to wait to enjoy this superpopular diner's vegetarian-friendly, hangover-busting, Southern-leaning take on breakfast classics — but the food and the creative, vibrant ambience is

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SIDETRIPS

NOE VALLEY

Muni: J Church

When San Francisco hipsters grow up, most move west of the Mission to Noe Valley, where they share their beautifully bourgeois, geographically isolated paradise with dot-com homeowners and other stroller-pushers. As a result, many businesses here appeal to those stroller-pushers, like the adorable gift, stationery, and kid's bookstore **Ladybug Ladybug** (3870 24th St., 415-824-5477, ladybugladybug.com). Others cater to folks who look upon their more adventurous days fondly, mixing SF's classic funky style with a touch of class and refinement. A perfect example is **Firefly** (4288 24th St., 415-821-7652, www.fireflyrestaurant.com), serving world-class cuisine in a rustic-chic, casual setting. And for those who bought Victorians with tech boom money, there are mini-hotspots like **Bliss** (4026 24th St., 415-826-6200, www.blissbarsf.com), a crimson-lit lounge with chichi cocktails and a back room separated from the front by a chain-link fence.

22ND & VALENCIA CONTINUED

well worth the wait. Put your name on the list, enjoy a cup of coffee on the patio of Revolution Café down the street, and work up your appetite with some of the city's best hipster watching.

3296 22nd St. (415) 824-4088, www.boogaloosf.com

3. The Curiosity Shoppe

It's a few blocks from 22nd, but the detour is worth it once you get to this cute, quirky shop whose focus is arts, crafts, and other DIY products of your surreal and Dada dreams. Don't miss the card catalog drawers near the window, filled with everchanging delights for mere pennies. For more strange, surprising delights, visit 826 Valencia and Paxton Gate across the street, or Little Otsu next door. 855 Valencia. (415) 839-6404, www.curiosityshoppeonline.com

4. Loló

This delightful newcomer restaurant is an ideal place to sample the innovative, fun, fusiony approach to high-end cuisine that defines SF's food scene. Loló's version is inspired by Turkish and Mexican specialties, expertly blended and creatively presented. Whimsical decor, including wallpaper made of Mexican lottery tickets, lends an unpretentious feel to the fine-dining experience. 3230 22nd St. (415) 643-5656

5. Minnie Wilde

Owner-designed, San Francisco-produced women's clothes with an edgy take on classic looks: that's what draws splurging locals and discerning tourists to Minnie Wilde. The cute, chic items, paired with unique jewelry crafted by Bay Area artists and carefully-chosen vintage finds, will give any girl instant Mission style. 3266 21st St. (415) 642-9453, www.minniewilde.com

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HOTSPOT: **HAYES & OCTAVIA**

Hayes Valley, the Mission's younger, more sophisticated sister, is known for blending San Francisco's hip, funky style with an upscale sensibility. Given its haute couture for shoppers, chic culinary fare for Civic Center culturati, and unusual furnishings for homeowners, it's no surprise that this growing neighborhood draws all types.

Muni: 21 Hayes

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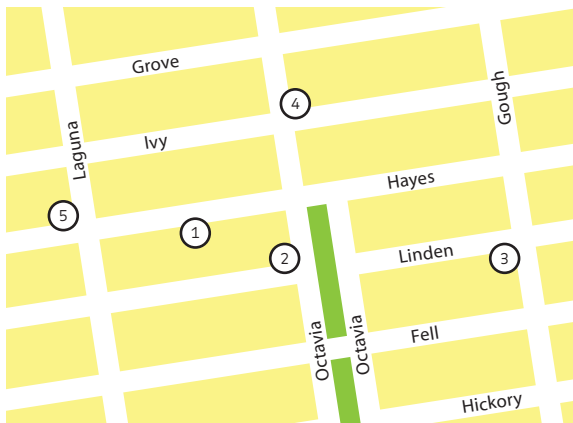
SIDETRIPS

LOWER HAIGHT

Muni: 7 Haight, 22 Fillmore

While the world has been focused on the Upper Haight's historic roots or Hayes Valley's promising and *überchic* future, the neighborhood between them has been left to define itself. Like an overlooked middle child free to develop a personality outside family expectations, the grittier Lower Haight is lower brow than younger sis Hayes, lower key than older sis Haight-Ashbury, and more diverse than hipster cousin Mission District. Do some only-in-San-Francisco shopping for indie fashions (some made while you watch) at **Pandora's Trunk** (544 Haight, 415-861-5310, www.pandorastrunk.com). Then grab a beer at whimsically cavelike **Noc Noc** (557 Haight, 861-5811, www.nocnocs.com) or a stiffer tittle at **Molotov's** (582 Haight, 415-558-8019) across the street for prime punk-rock people-watching. Try **Rosamunde Sausage Grill** (545 Haight, 415-437-6851) for great carry-along brats or funky **Memphis Minnie's** (575 Haight, 415-864-7675) for sit-down barbecue, Lower Haight style.

HAYES & OCTAVIA



1. Propeller

As fun for browsing as it is for buying, this whimsical interior design store is a beacon of “only in San Francisco” gift ideas for the modernist with a sense of humor. The everchanging stock of beautiful, interesting, and functional items seem made for the pages of *Dwell*. Nothing here comes cheap, but nothing’s cheaply made either. 555 Hayes. (415) 701-7767, www.propellermmodern.com

2. Miette Confiserie

A classic candy store for kids with eclectic taste, Miette is cute, fanciful, and a bit precious in its decor and its stock of sugary delights. Apothecary jars filled with imported sweets, salt-water taffy, and Dutch licorice are a feast for the eyes; while handmade cotton candy, adorable cupcakes, and even bacon-



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SIDETRIPS

SOMA

Muni: F Market, 12 Folsom
Ah, South of Market. Once it was a gritty industrial district crawling with cruisy gay leathermen, then a slicked-out gentrification ground zero full of odd dot-com boom architecture, it's now a rather charming mix of the two, with a population that's seen it all and doesn't want to bother telling you about it. There are several gourmet restaurant gems here and warehouse factory outlets, and at night the neighborhood becomes a clubber's paradise, with bars and clubs dotting almost every block from Market to Harrison between Eighth and 11th streets. If you're out for some evening revelry, check out massive techno and trance club **1015 Folsom** (1015 Folsom, 415-431-7444, www.1015.com) — but be sure to read the crowd in line first to see if it fits your taste. Scruffy gay leather bikers — and friends — flock to the large patio at the **Eagle Tavern** (398 12th St., 415-626-0880, www.sfeagle.com), especially on Sunday afternoons. For eats, go southeast near Fifth Street, to sample the authentic and fantastic Peruvian dishes of the intimate **Mochica Restaurant** (937 Harrison, 415-278-0480, www.mochicasf.com).

HAYES & OCTAVIA CONTINUED

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449 Octavia. (415) 626-6221, www.miettecakes.com

3. Blue Bottle Coffee Co.

It's generally accepted that this Oakland-based company's coffee is the best of the Bay. Their dedication to fresh roasting and one-cup-at-a-time brewing impresses coffee snobs and tea devotees alike. Plus, there's no denying the charm of their Hayes Valley kiosk, the grown-up lemonade stand that serves as a caffeinated reward for wandering up the alley south of Hayes. Just don't ask for pumpkin latte.

315 Linden. (415) 252-7535, www.bluebottlecoffee.net

4. RAG — Residents Apparel Gallery

Embracing San Francisco's unusual style and DIY spirit, this surprisingly diverse boutique stocks the finest and funkiest in local designers' clothes, bags, hats, and jewelry for men, women, and kids. Most items are reasonably priced — especially since you'll never see anyone in your hometown wearing the same watch-cog cufflinks or hand-knit fingerless gloves you bought here.

541 Octavia. (415) 621-7718, www.ragsf.com

5. Modern Tea

This unpretentious, cozy restaurant café lives up to its name with an expansive, exotic tea list complemented by simple, satisfying food. It's the perfect place for brunch (try the salmon hash) or an afternoon shopping break — and the menu's pleasing to veggies and vegans too.

602 Hayes. (415) 626-5406, www.moderntea.com

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HOTSPOT:
**STOCKTON,
GREEN &
COLUMBUS**

This vast three-way intersection spans North Beach and Chinatown, and you'll find delicious Italian pastry and gelato shops, mind-blowing Asian herbal remedy outlets, and remnants of Beat culture along its edges. It's also one of the few spots in San Francisco where you can still feel a palpable sense of history, from the old-school Victorian architecture supporting laundry lines, to the elaborate stone edifices of the churches and meeting halls, to the shirtless seniors greeting each other in unfathomable Sicilian dialects.

*Muni: 20 Columbus,
30 Stockton*

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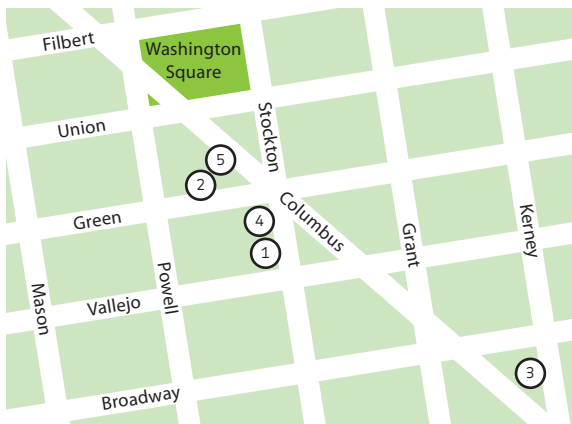
SIDETRIPS

DOWNTOWN

Muni: 1 California, 30 Stockton, F line

Like a classic city center, SF's downtown (south of North Beach and Chinatown) is dense with retail shops, office buildings, hotels, urban restaurants, and museums — all with an understandably more button-downed feel than the city's other neighborhoods. Catch a show or just ogle the architecture along the Geary Street theater district, paying particular attention to the historic **Geary Theater** (415 Geary, 415-749-2228, www.act-sf.org). You'll find a plethora of worthy fine dining spots in this 'hood, but for a particularly spectacular, sophisticated meal, try hidden gem **Café Andrée** (562 Sutter, 415-217-4001, www.jdvhotels.com), housed next to the literary-themed lounge inside Hotel Rex. Other downtown highlights are album-hunting at independent music store **Rasputin Music** (69 Powell, 800-350-8700, www.rasputinmusic.com) and people-watching at Union Square.

STOCKTON, GREEN & COLUMBUS



1. North Beach Museum

Tucked up in the mezzanine of a Bank of America, located above the Chinese-language East Wind Bookstore (featured English translation: “Synopsis of the Prescription of the Golden Chamber”) is this free gem of cultural history, featuring blown-up Great Quake photographs, preserved Asian immigrant clothing, and a wealth of engrossing artifacts of the neighborhood’s flux and flow. 1435 Stockton. (415) 391-6210

2. O’Reilly’s

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SIDETRIPS

BERKELEY

BART: Richmond

Brimming with students, creative types, sunshine, and radical history, Berkeley makes a great afternoon or evening for visitors and SF residents. Dress in something breezy (preferably made of hemp), hop on BART, and get some art, culture, and great food. Although it's a bit off the beaten path of the UC Berkeley–Telegraph Street nexus, locals love to wipe the ghee off their chins at fab Indian cookery nook **Viks Chaat Corner** (724 Allston, 510-644-4412, www.viksdistributors.com). You'll find a plethora of street theater in Berkeley, but for famous names and ballet and world music bliss, check out the **Cal Performances series** (www.calperformances.net), whose season stretches throughout most of the year and takes place primarily in the gorgeous Zellerbach Hall on the UC Berkeley campus. And when you're done browsing incense shops, head to **Musical Offering** (2430 Bancroft Way, Berk. 510-849-0211, www.musicaloffering.com), a small, independent record store with an incredible selection of medieval music.

STOCKTON, GREEN & COLUMBUS

CONTINUED

The Irish have a long history here, too. O'Reilly's, a storied, cavernous-yet-cozy pub pays tribute with a satisfying, piping hot menu of Celtic eats and music in an authentic atmosphere that's earned it several "Best of" awards and the loyal patronage of a colorful batch of regulars both green and gray.

622 Green. (415) 989-6222, www.oreillysirish.com

3. Lusty Lady

America's first unionized strip club, full of punk-rock lovelies and old-timey peep show theatrics. It can get a little raunchy in the tiny viewing booths, but San Franciscans — gay and straight, men, women, and other — consider this landmark a good, sticky time.

1033 Kearny. (415) 391-1326, www.lustyladysf.com

4. A. Cavalli & Co.

The espresso served at this tiny, two-story café and bookstore is among the best in the city, and for that alone it's worth visiting (added bonus: hunky staff). But it's Cavalli's extensive collection of hard-to-find Italian-language graphic novels and paperbacks that really sets this bookseller apart.

1441 Stockton. (415) 421-4219

5. L'Osteria del Forno

There's no doubt that the Italian food in North Beach is the main draw — besides the many strip clubs. But this little hole in the wall takes gustatory delight to another level. Everything is cooked in an oven — no stovetops allowed — and brings the authentic flavors of Varese and Bologna straight to your lips.

519 Columbus. (415) 982-1124, www.losteriadelforno.com



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HOTSPOT: **DIVISADERO & PAGE**

Located at the eastern tip of the Panhandle, the neighborhood surrounding this intersection is rapidly gentrifying, but still shows its working-class African American and scruffy skater roots. Grab a coffee at the nearby Bean Bag or Mojo cafés, and do a little wandering before you head west into Golden Gate Park.

GUARDIAN PHOTO BY
BRANDON JOSEPH BAKER



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SIDETRIPS

UPPER HAIGHT

Muni: 6 Parnassus, 7 Haight

The epicenter and birthplace of hippie culture still attracts disenfranchised youth with its head shops, Eastern-leaning boutiques, proximity to Golden Gate Park, and teeming street life. But modern day Haight-Ashbury accommodates more than just the hemp-and-hacksack subculture, now features shops where punks, burners, sex workers, skaters, and other anti-establishment types can get their accoutrements. A classic example is **Piedmont** (1452 Haight, 415-864-8075, www.piedmontsf.com), whose giant fishnet legs outside only hint at the extent of the feathers, glitter, neon, and lace party wear waiting inside. For a glance at what gentrification and 40 years of thriving tourism (sidewalks are almost non-navigable on weekends) has introduced, check out new upscale hotspot **Alembic** (1725 Haight, 415-666-0822, www.alembicbar.com) for top-notch whiskey cocktails and sophisticated cuisine. Or, while the hungry, rowdy masses clamber for tables at the worthy-but-crowded Cha Cha Cha, head instead to local favorite **Citrus Club** (1790 Haight, 415-387-6366), where steaming bowls of noodle soup are still affordable.

DIVISADERO & PAGE



1. Independent

Along with Slim's in SoMa and Great American Music Hall in the Polk District, the Independent is one of the largest concert venues in the city where you'll hear the best indie, folk, rock, and world acts before they break big. Cruising the line outside at night guarantees you'll be clued in to what the cool kids are wearing this week.

628 Divisadero. (415) 771-1421, www.independentsf.com

2. Madrone

Owner Leila Fakouri has installed her own funky collection of furniture in this bar-gallery-nightclub — and the good-looking creatures who grab one of the unique, home-infused vodka cocktails from the bar and sit their tender tushes down on it

The **GUARDIAN** is proud to present the winning photos in our first-ever Explore SF Readers' Photo Contest!



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Submitted by

Deanna Jade Yee



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Submitted by

Daniel Ransom

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GUARDIAN

SIDETRIPS

UPPER FILLMORE/ MARINA

Muni: 22 Fillmore, 30 Stockton, 41 Union

Things get ritzier as you head north from Western Addition. In Pacific Heights, where those with privilege live in Victorian mansions and buy sweaters for their dogs, indulge yourself with exotic chocolate drinks at **Bittersweet Café** (2123 Fillmore, 415-346-8715, www.bittersweetchocolatecafe.com) or on swanky home-decor eye candy at **Nest** (2300 Fillmore, 415-292-6199). Or head further toward the water to shop (on Union Street), dine (on Chestnut Street), and drink (Fillmore at Greenwich streets) with the city's beautiful, young, fit, postgrad singles. For edgier Marina flavor, head all the way to Fort Mason, a maze of art galleries and small theaters. This is where you'll find **Greens** (Building A, Fort Mason, 415-771-6222, www.greensrestaurant.com), famous not only for its award-winning gourmet vegetarian cuisine but for the view of the Golden Gate Bridge from its waterfront floor-to-ceiling windows.

DIVISADERO & PAGE CONTINUED

always look extremely pleased with her decision. Then they dance to hip-hop and house tunes.

500 Divisadero. (415) 241-0202, www.madronelounge.com

3. Cookin'

A beloved San Francisco treasure as famous for its eye-popping international collection of vintage cookware and recipe books as for the stern demeanor of its owner. She won't bite, though, and her taste in unique and antique kitchen gadgetry is impeccable. If you've traveled the world looking for the perfect Moldovan egg cup, you'll probably find it here.

339 Divisadero, 861-1854

4. Brown Bear

A new addition to the neighborhood, but not nearly as ritzy or pricey as some of the others, Brown Bear is an art gallery and clothing boutique whose evening events brim over with hipsters and art lovers. The clothes run from vintage to independently designed, and the art is always delightfully challenging.

289 Divisadero. (415) 626-5779, www.brownbearsf.com

5. Eddie's

What else can we say, except "Korean soul food café," echoing Eddie's sign? While no Korean food appears on the breakfast and lunch menu (Eddie's closes at 4 p.m.), a wealth of good ol' greasy American hangover remedies like omelets and grits await, with gallons of hot sauce nearby. The Korean family staff is unfailingly friendly to the skaters and post-clubbers packed within.

800 Divisadero. (415) 563-9780

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HOTSPOT:

6TH AVENUE & CLEMENT

Russian, Korean, Chinese, and Irish influences all converge in the Inner Richmond neighborhood, and you can find them all present at this usually sunny, bustling intersection. The nearby Park Presidio to the north is perfect for nature lovers, and further up Clement Street you'll find an almost-suburban ambiance with well-kept family homes and adorable little gardens.

GUARDIAN PHOTO BY
BRANDON JOSEPH BAKER



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SIDETRIPS

INNER SUNSET

Muni: N Judah, 6 Parnassus

To the south of the Richmond district, on the other side of Golden Gate Park, is the Sunset district, named to attract homebuyers to its rather foggy environs.

But it's actually quite sunny on many days, and Irving and Judah streets between Fourth and 10th avenues offer a number of interesting shops, restaurants, and bakeries, as well as sidewalks packed with casual strollers and young mothers pushing double-wide prams. For some of the best Cajun and seafood cooking, stop by **PJ's Oysterbed** (737 Irving, 415-566-7775, www.pjsosterbed.com) to enjoy a New Orleans-

by-way-of-San Francisco — i.e., wildly festive yet healthy. Or grab a refreshing cupful of iced delight (you'll know the vanilla bean by the picture of Vanilla Ice above it) before you hit the park at **Holy Gelato** (1392 Ninth Ave., 415-681-3061, www.holygelato.com). If you're looking for edifying entertainment later — or just want to pick up some flyers and connect with some of the city's culturalists — peruse the labyrinthine shelves of foreign and rare film releases at **Le Video** (1231 Ninth Ave., 415-566-3606, www.levideo.com).

6TH AVENUE & CLEMENT



1. Green Apple Books and Music

With three ramshackle floors of books in the main building and a large fiction and music annex two doors down, Green Apple is the largest used bookstore in Northern California — and carries a seemingly infinite range of new titles as well. Exploring the haphazardly stacked tomes of yore here could easily engross you for weeks. 506 Clement. (415) 387-2272, www.greenapplebooks.com

2. Toy Boat

An tasty ice cream store brimming with rare toys and hilarious hard-to-find novelty items, this cute aqua-painted outpost of collectibles is an inner child's dream come true. Gaze upon the

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SIDETRIPS

BEACHES

Yes, those myths about San Francisco being foggy and cold are mostly true — although things heat up often, and the skies can be clear and the air dry for weeks at a stretch, especially in late spring and early fall. While the waters of the Pacific and the bay are far too cold and often too dangerous to swim in, locals usually find other ways to have fun on the city's beaches. Like by taking off their clothes, for example, and engaging in a spirited game of volleyball on picture-perfect **Baker Beach** (25th Ave. and El Camino del Mar, 415-566-0560) on the city's northwest outer reaches. Recent construction has made Baker less secluded and more accessible to families, so you may want to watch where you spike your balls. On the west side of town, **Ocean Beach** (Fulton and Great Highway, 415-561-4323) is a wide expanse of sand that sometimes hosts wild bonfire parties at night that attract Burning Man fans. And there's nothing like the exhilarating sight of hang gliders swooping over the cliffs of **Fort Funston** (Skyline Blvd. and John Muir Dr., 415-561-4323), just to the south of Ocean Beach.

6TH AVENUE & CLEMENT CONTINUED

many frozen faces of Pee Wee Herman marionettes as you lick your pistachio cone with sprinkles.
401 Clement. (415) 751-7501

3. Good Luck Dim Sum

Park your buns in the tiny dining area to chow down on scrumptious pork buns and sticky rice, or grab a green onion pancake and parcel of shrimp dumplings to go. Good Luck is only one of the many dim sum pit stops along Clement Street, but it's one of the best. It's also one of the hippest, so expect a lengthy but culturally literate line.
736 Clement. (415) 386-3388

4. Spices!

Somewhere it's written that everyone should try pig's intestine casserole with "numbing chili oil" just once in their life. OK, there's probably some exceptions, amid the other curious and familiar items on this nouveau-Sichuanese hole in the wall's menu. Boasting pumped-up peppery flavors that'll make you burst into tears, the multiple offerings here are at least a must-see, if not a must-try.
294 Eighth Ave. (415) 752-8884, www.eatsspices.com

5. The Plough and Stars

A lively roster of folksy Celtic musicians and boatloads of Guinness in this attitude-free tavern are its claims to fame, although the lovely local lads and lasses who flock to The Plough and Stars' bar and worn-smooth benches are its main attraction. Several other Irish pubs dot the area, so your glass will never unfrost and your head will never fall.
116 Clement. (415) 751-1122, www.theploughandstars.com

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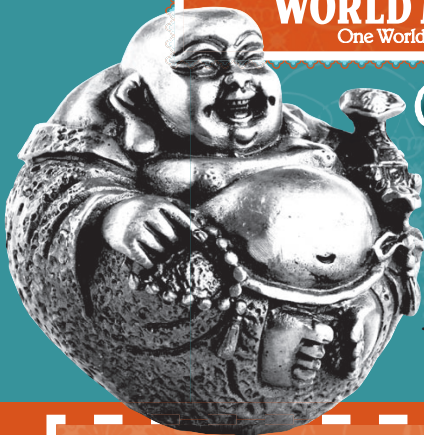
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